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The Fatal Blow



Edward M. Harris

THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY

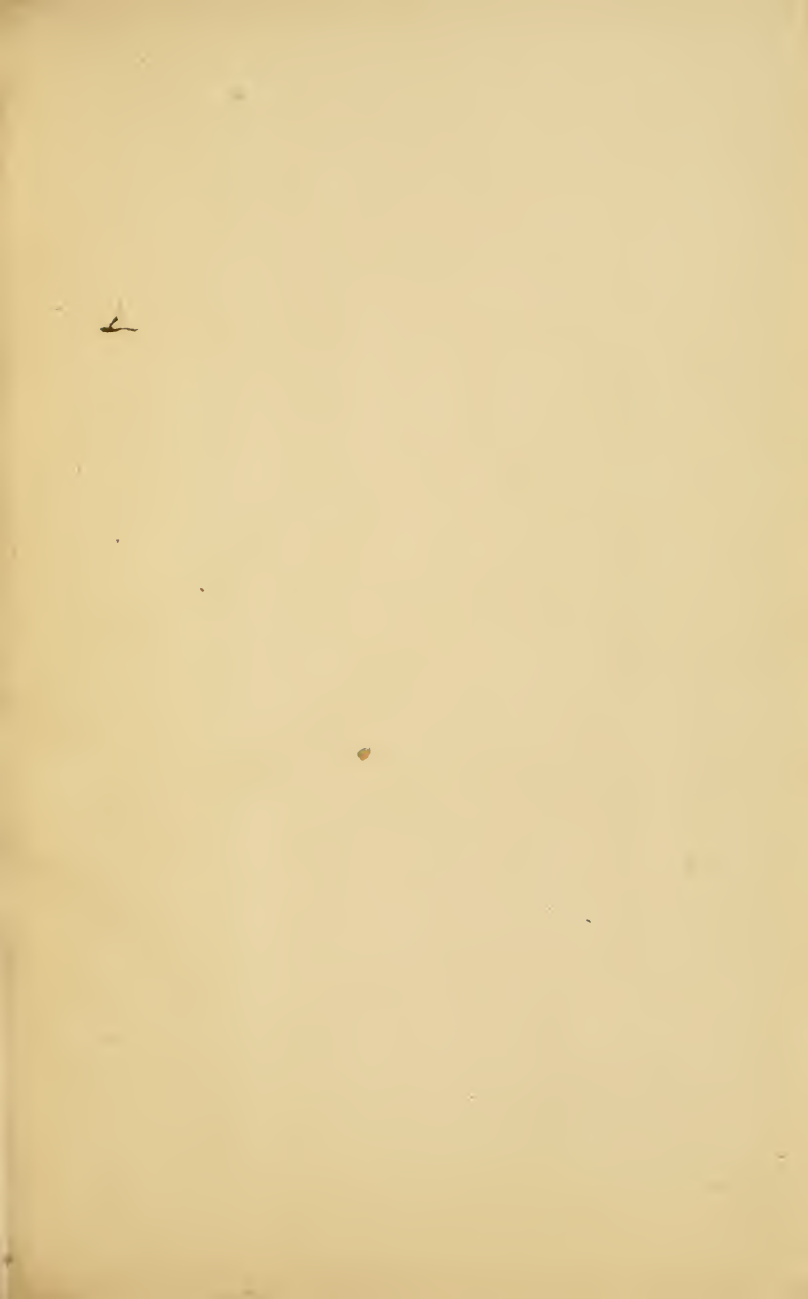


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A Melodrama in Three Acts

BY

EDWARD M. HARRIS



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The Fatal Blow

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The Fatal Blow

CAST OF CHARACTERS

EVERETT SEARLES, . . . *president of the People's Bank.*
THOMAS ALLEN, *cashier in People's Bank.*
FREDERICK MONTFORD-ELY, *cousin of Searles.*
TOBIAS SMYTHE, . . . *called Toby, of the People's Bank,*
and friend of Allen's.
JIM YERKES, . . . *known as "Tin"; works while the*
world sleeps.
JERRY ADAMS, . . *known as "Eve"; colleague of Yerkes.*
DETECTIVE.
MRS. DOANE, *a friend of Ely's.*
MARY SEARLES, *president's oldest daughter.*
FREDERICA SEARLES, *called Freda, her sister.*
JENNIE, *servant in the house of Searles.*
MOTHER BOYCE, *friend of Yerkes.*
POLICE.

TIME IN REPRESENTATION :—Two hours.

ARGUMENT

Montford-Ely plans to marry Mary Searles, who loves Tom Allen. Her father's bank is robbed by Ely, who causes Allen to be arrested. Mrs. Doane, a friend of Ely's, helps him to kidnap Mary; but when Ely strikes her she turns against him and tells Allen where Mary is hidden. Allen rescues Mary, is himself exonerated and Ely goes to prison.

ACT I.—President's office in the People's Bank. Ely's threat. "I'll tell all." Searles: "You have me in your power." Ely plots to rob bank. Mary refuses Ely's offer of marriage. Allen and Smythe do a little detective work. The lost plan. Ely and Allen. "You would accuse me?" "Yes, you deceitful cur."

ACT II.—Library in home of Searles. "The bank has been robbed." Allen and Mary. "It would be wrong to ask you to be my wife while this stigma of crime hangs over me." "Let me be the judge of that." The decoy letter. "I'll go. It may save you." Ely and Searles. "You must have Allen arrested." "Yes, if only to protect ourselves." Allen accuses Ely of having misappropriated money. "You lie!" "Who'd believe a thief?" Allen accused of robbing the bank and arrested.

ACT III.—Apartments of Mrs. Doane. Mrs. Doane and Ely arrange to kidnap Mary. "Mary Searles must be my wife." Mary and Mrs. Doane. "Your baby face has robbed me of the man I love." "I detest him." "It's your money he wants." Ely strikes Mrs. Doane—the fatal blow. "I'll place him behind prison bars."

ACT IV.—Cellar room in the house of "Mother Boyce." Mother Boyce in charge of Mary. Smythe goes for the police; Allen hides. "Are you men of honor?" Adams has a soft spot in his heart. Ely and Adams. "I'm to give you five thousand apiece." "We've changed our minds." Mary's dash for liberty. Allen commands the situation. "Move an inch and I'll fire." The police. "The game is up." Allen exonerated. Love reigns supreme.

COSTUMES

SEARLES. Should be about fifty years old, gray hair, moustache or beard. Well dressed in business suit.

ALLEN. About twenty-five years old, well dressed throughout. Moustache or smooth face.

SMYTHE. A little younger than Allen and well dressed. Smooth face.

MONTFORD-ELY. About thirty to thirty-five years of age, dark hair and moustache and dresses well.

YERKES AND ADAMS. In Act I, Yerkes wears frock coat and Adams business suit, but both are evidently not used to being dressed so well. In Acts III and IV, they are more roughly dressed. In Act IV, they may appear without coats or collars, arms bare, etc.

DETECTIVE AND POLICE. Detective wears ordinary business suit and hat. Police should wear uniform with badges, etc.

MRS. DOANE. Is about thirty and fashionably dressed. Outdoor costume in Acts I and IV.

MARY SEARLES. About twenty-five and well dressed. Wears walking-suit and hat in Acts I and III, and indoor morning costume in Act II. In Act IV same costume as Act III, but without hat, gloves, etc.

FREDA. Is about eighteen and well dressed. Outdoor costume in Acts I and IV.

JENNIE. Servant's costume.

MOTHER BOYCE. About sixty, gray hair, poorly dressed; wears an apron, and a small shawl about shoulders.

PROPERTIES

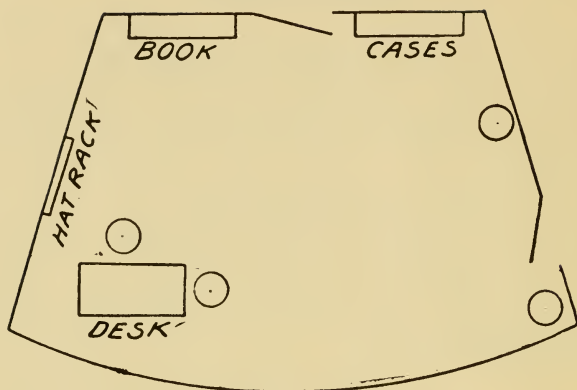
ACT I.—Paper for Smythe; cigarette for Ely; drawing on paper for Yerkes; roll of paper to represent plan of building for Allen. (This should be a blue-print if possible.) Handkerchief for Allen.

ACT II.—Newspaper for Mary; letter for Jennie; book for Ely; handcuffs for detective.

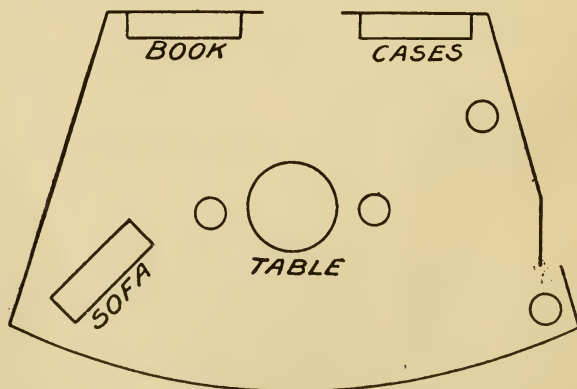
ACT III.—Revolver for Mary; handkerchief for Adams.

ACT IV. Shawl for Mary; revolvers for Allen, Smythe, Ely, Adams, Yerkes.

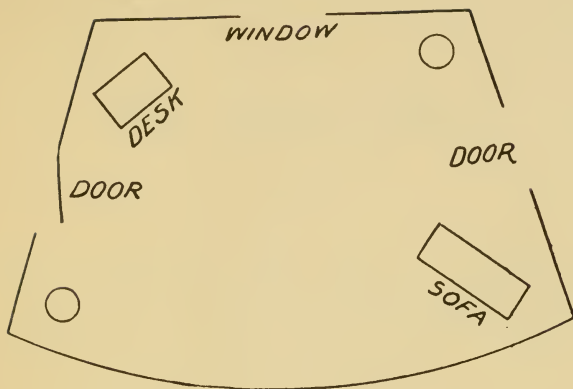
SCENE PLOTS



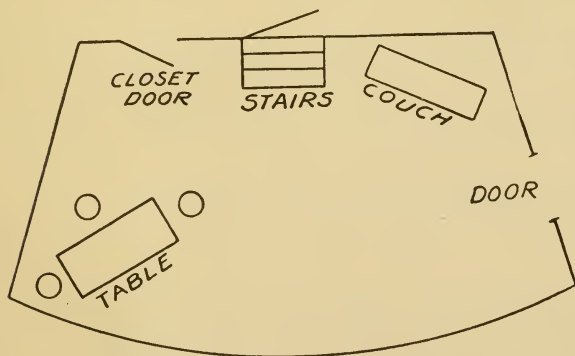
ACT I.—President's office at bank. Doors c. and l. flat-top desk down r., with chairs near it; hat-rack with hooks against wall r. There may be bookcases right and left of c. door. Engravings on walls, etc.



ACT II.—Library at home of Mr. Searles. Handsomely furnished interior. Wide door with portières in flat c.; door l. Sofa down r.; tables, chairs, etc.



ACT III.—Mrs. Doane's apartment. Wide door with curtains L., door R., window c. Small desk with clock up R., sofa down L. Other furnishings as desired.



ACT IV.—Cellar at Mother Boyce's. Door L., supposed to lead to other rooms in the house, and to street. Short flight of steps c. leads to door which opens on alleyway. Closet door right of steps; couch up L., table and three chairs, with hanging lamp over table down R.

The Fatal Blow

ACT I

SCENE.—*President's office. Doors C. and L. For description see Scene Plot, page 6. At rise EVERETT SEARLES discovered seated at flat-topped desk, R. TOBIAS SMYTHE enters C., and comes down and hands a paper to SEARLES. He then turns and starts up.*

SEARLES (*looking up*). Oh, Smythe!

SMYTHE. Yes, sir.

SEARLES. Isn't your father a senator?

SMYTHE. Yes, sir.

SEARLES. He seems to be questioning the methods employed by the promoters of the Consolidated Street Railroad in securing its charter. In fact, he has started an investigation.

SMYTHE. I was not aware of it, sir. My father is a very conscientious man. The people realized that, sir, when they elected him as senator.

SEARLES. Do you believe he could be induced to drop the matter?

SMYTHE. Not if he believes he's in the right.

SEARLES. You understand, of course, that I would not want him to do anything but what he would consider to be right.

SMYTHE. Oh, yes, sir.

SEARLES. My suggestion to drop the matter is not for personal interests, but for the bank's; which is heavily interested. You can understand what effect such an investigation as this will have on the market value of the stocks of the road.

SMYTHE. I understand, sir.

SEARLES (*looking sharply at SMYTHE*). Er—er—I expect my daughters here this afternoon. Freda said something about having you—er—I've forgotten—er—just what. She'll tell you herself.

SMYTHE. Thank you, sir. Nothing more, sir?

SEARLES (*busy at desk*). No.

SMYTHE. 'Thought he could pump me.

(*Exit, door C.*)

SEARLES. Did I do right in speaking to that boy of this affair? But I can't get it out of my mind. Suppose they find out that—that—we—no! no! Montford-Ely must see to that.

(*Enter FREDERICK MONTFORD-ELY, L.*)

ELY. Ah! Everett, hard at work?

SEARLES. Yes, Mr. Ely.

ELY. Mr. Ely, cousin? Why so formal?

SEARLES. Pardon the formality. I'm greatly worried.

ELY. About what?

SEARLES. This investigation up at Albany into the methods employed by us in securing the charter for the Consolidated. Smythe is stirring up a fuss. You've seen the paper, of course.

ELY. Yes. That's what I've called to see you about. I had a wire from Albany.

SEARLES. Have they found out anything?

ELY. Not yet. I believe Smythe's son is employed here in the bank.

SEARLES. Yes. I've tried hard to pump him, but he gave me the political honesty speech. Every man has his price, if you can find it.

ELY. You'd better discharge young Smythe. And also that man Allen.

SEARLES. Discharge Allen! Absurd. He's the best, the safest man we've got. And to let Smythe go would be showing our hand and would encourage his father to push this investigation with renewed vigor.

ELY. But I tell you they are spying upon us. Allen has been nosing around and is hot on the trail. He knows too much.

SEARLES. We must throw them off of the track. I'll see my daughter Mary. She has some influence with Allen. But these men—that—that—we bought. They'll not ——

ELY. You can't tell what they'll do to save themselves.

SEARLES. But you have arranged it so that I cannot be implicated?

ELY. I have done the best I could.

SEARLES. I'm not blaming you. I'll put my trust in Mary to save the day.

ELY (*savagely*). I don't wish to have Mary become too familiar with Allen. That's a matter that has also brought me here to-day. I want your assistance in securing her consent to a marriage with me.

SEARLES. You are a relative. I don't believe in this intermarrying of cousins.

ELY. Relationship, bah! I'm not a relative of hers. Searles, I want your daughter, Mary, for my wife. I'm going to have her. I'll brook no interference from Allen. You must help me, or I go before this committee on investigation and tell all I know.

SEARLES. No! no! man, would you ruin me?

ELY (*carelessly lighting a cigarette*). That's for you to decide.

SEARLES. You were well paid for what you did. Why play the traitor?

ELY. Traitor is rather a harsh word, Searles. However, I'll pass it. I've set my heart on marrying Mary; but this Allen seems to hold the upper hand. Get rid of him, Searles; do you understand? Get rid of him, or ——

SEARLES. Yes, yes. You have me in your power. Why did I trust you?

ELY. You should have thought of that before.

SEARLES. You want to marry Mary? But this woman, this Mrs. Doane, what is she to you?

ELY. Very useful at times, as you are well aware.

SEARLES. I mean, are you engaged to her? Are you going to marry her?

ELY. I said she was useful to me.

SEARLES. Useful to you?

ELY. Yes, just in the same manner as she has been useful to you. You were ready enough to avail yourself of Mrs. Doane's assistance in the Consolidated's affair. She is busy now trying to checkmate our estimable friend Allen. I expect her to call and report to you what she knows. Oh! by the way, I expect two men to meet me here. I trust you will pardon the liberty I've taken in inviting them here.

SEARLES. Men who can be of use to us?

ELY. Ah—yes. (*Aside.*) To me,

SEARLES. You'll want me, of course?

ELY. No! no! I'll—I'll arrange matters with them.

SEARLES. Won't you need me to explain—er—our position?

ELY. It's better that I deal with them.

SEARLES. Very well. You know best.

ELY. You'll see that we are not disturbed.

SEARLES. Yes. (*Knock is heard on door L.*)

ELY. This must be they now.

SEARLES. I'll return when they are gone.

ELY (*crossing to L.*). All right, all right.

(*Exit SEARLES, C.*)

(ELY opens door L. and "TIN" YERKES enters. *He is dressed in a Prince Albert, etc. He acts ill at ease during the whole scene.*)

YERKES. Well, chum, here I am. What de yer think of me rig?

ELY. You'll pass. Where is the other man?

YERKES. Adams? He's in the hall. We never take no chances.

ELY. Call him in.

YERKES. Is it safe?

ELY. Yes.

YERKES. All right. (*Crosses L. and calls off.*) Sist! Eve.

ADAMS (*outside*). Do yer want me?

YERKES. Sure. Come in.

(*Enter JERRY ADAMS, L.*)

ELY (*to YERKES*). We can trust him?

YERKES. Yer know me?

ELY. Yes.

YERKES (*waving his hand toward ADAMS*). This is Adams, and this (*pointing to ELY*) is the boss.

ELY. Glad to know you.

ADAMS (*shaking hands*). Same here.

YERKES. Now to business.

ELY. I'm running a great risk in bringing you here, but it's the only way for you to see how the land lies without arousing suspicion. Should we be interrupted, you are two

politicians assisting me in a matter of vital importance. Say nothing, but look wise.

YERKES. We're on.

ELY. Did you look the building over on the outside?

YERKES. Sure. We won't need a ladder, 'cause they've put a pile of lumber in the alleyway. So we can reach the window from that.

ELY. Good. Did you examine the bars?

YERKES. The bars are old and rusty. We'll file them easily enough. I just sketched this off. It'll kinder help us to lay our plan.

(Takes rough drawing from his pocket.)

ELY. That's fine! You've lost no time.

YERKES. This ain't the first bank we's cracked.

ELY. No, I suppose not.

YERKES *(as all three study the plan)*. After we gets in, it'll be easy sailin'.

ADAMS *(who has been eyeing ELY suspiciously)*. Ain't it a little irregular for you to be in a deal like this?

ELY. Er—er—yes—er—per——

YERKES. Cut it out, Eve. We'll ask no questions, boss.

ADAMS. Sure.

ELY *(pointing to plan)*. By this door we pass behind the counter, and the vault will be right in front of us.

ADAMS. Just like takin' money from a child.

YERKES. They ain't any burglar alarm fixin's on the doors?

ELY. No. They've been disconnected, owing to alterations that are being made. Nothing to fear but the watchman.

YERKES. We'll take care of him.

ELY. No killing.

ADAMS. We's knows our business. Say, mister *(as YERKES puts plan in his pocket)*, what's to be our share?

YERKES. Not so fast, Eve, not so fast.

ELY. Wait till we see what we get.

YERKES. That's right. He'll be on the square.

ELY. What will we do with the money, when we get it? It won't do to be too rich, you know, right after the break. We'll have to wait till the excitement blows over.

ADAMS. You's a wise guy, all right, all right.

YERKES. Mother Boyce will take care of it.

ELY. Who is she ?

ADAMS. Diden yer ever hear of the Boyce house ?

ELY. I must plead ignorance.

YERKES. It's over on the East River.

ELY. Safe ?

YERKES. Yes. 'The motto there is, "What's his is his." The man what don't live up to it sees his finish.

ELY (*pausing*). Suppose I wanted to find a place for a young lady to spend a few days.

YERKES. No better in the country.

ADAMS. No questions asked and the best of care.

ELY. What sort is this Mother Boyce ?

YERKES. Not much to look at; but she can keep her mouth shut.

ELY. Then you think it's quite safe ?

YERKES. As though she was dead.

ELY. I'll decide later.

YERKES. You know where to find us ?

ADAMS. We'll be ready. See you outside, Tin.

(*Exit ADAMS, L.*)

ELY. I'll see you at the alley on the stroke of one.

YERKES. We'll be on hand.

(*Exit, L.*)

ELY. To-night I'll have the money; and I need money badly enough, heaven knows. If the game doesn't go right—but why think of that ?

(*Enter SEARLES, C.*)

SEARLES. What success, Ely ?

ELY. I don't know yet. I can tell better after (*aside*) to-night (*aloud*) a little later. A few days.

(*Enter MARY SEARLES, C.*)

MARY (*not noticing ELY*). I fear I've kept you waiting, father ?

SEARLES. No, Mary. Didn't Freda come with you ?

MARY. Yes. She will be here presently.

ELY. Am I to be overlooked ?

MARY (*somewhat annoyed and not noticing ELY's outstretched hand*). Oh ! Mr. Ely—er — (*Abruptly.*)

How do you do? (*To her father.*) I'm not intruding, father?

SEARLES. No, Mary. Cousin Ely and I have finished, at least temporarily, the business at hand.

MARY. Then we'll go.

ELY. Before you do, Miss Searles, I would like to speak to you. To renew a subject about which I have spoken to you —

MARY. Please spare me. Believe me, Mr. Ely, it is becoming tiresome to me to be forced to listen to your professions of love. Not that I do not appreciate the honor, but what you ask is quite impossible.

ELY. Am I so distasteful to you? Possibly this man, Allen, is more to your liking.

MARY. It's not a question of tastes, Mr. Ely, but of love.

ELY. I could teach you to love me.

MARY. Why prolong this discussion? This is hardly the place — (*To her father.*) Are you ready, father?

ELY. One moment, Mary. I'm going to teach you to love me. I have your father's permission. Further, it's his dearest wish that we marry. (*To SEARLES.*) Am I not right?

SEARLES (*speaking with effort*). Yes, Mary, — I've — great — regard — for Frederick, and — nothing — would please — (*Pause. To ELY.*) Why not wait a while, Ely? — At least — until I — I'd like to talk the matter over — er — privately with — with — er — Mary.

ELY. I can depend upon you?

SEARLES. Yes. (*Staggers.*)

MARY. Father! (*Goes to him.*)

SEARLES. It's nothing. Just a slight dizziness.

ELY. You should take a rest.

SEARLES. You said we would have information concerning the Consolidated this afternoon.

ELY. Yes. I will return shortly. (*Crosses L. To MARY.*) I'm not discouraged, Mary.

(*Exit, L.*)

MARY. Do you feel ill, father?

SEARLES. No, Mary, it was just for the moment.

(*Crosses R. for his hat.*)

(*Enter THOMAS ALLEN, door C. He carries plans, rolled.*)

ALLEN. How do you do, Mary? (*Shakes hands.*)

MARY. I haven't seen you for several days.

ALLEN. No—er ——

SEARLES (*coming to c.*). You wish to see me, Allen?

ALLEN. Yes, sir. I return the plans.

(*Offers them to SEARLES.*)

SEARLES. Place them on the desk. Has Gregory finished with them?

ALLEN. He will not need them. (*Places plan on desk, r.*) He wishes to see you in the bank, in regard to the alterations. Shall I tell him you are engaged?

SEARLES. No, I'll go and see him. (*To MARY.*) Mary, you will pardon me?

MARY. Yes. (*Exit SEARLES, door c.*) Now, sir, where have you been all this time?

ALLEN (*cornered, but trying to bluff*). Why—I don't know. I ——

MARY. Why haven't you come to see me?

ALLEN (*desperately*). Well, Mary, it's because I understand, that is, I've heard a rumor, that you are engaged to marry Montford-Ely. So I was afraid you would not be at home—to me.

MARY. How absurd, Tom. What a falsehood. If this world were peopled by women and one man, and that man was Montford-Ely, and I was his choice for a wife, I would far rather death should claim me for its own than marry that man. I distrust, despise him.

ALLEN. Continue to distrust him. I can't tell you why, because I'm not sure enough of his trickery to act. He is clever, and would not stop at anything to accomplish his end. But I will defeat him yet.

MARY. You must, Tom; because I want you to.

ALLEN. Then I will, Mary, for your sake.

MARY. Thank you, Tom.

ALLEN. Mary, there is something very important that I want to say to you.

MARY. Not here, Tom, please. I can't tell you why just now. Come to-morrow.

ALLEN. Yes. Ah! Mary, the coming of to-morrow will be, to me, as long as eternity. And when I see you I want to tell you about the success I've had in a business deal.

MARY. I'll be glad to hear about it. But whether you

had money or not, Tom, would not influence the trust and confidence I have in you.

(*Enter SMYTHE, c.*)

SMYTHE. Mr. Searles is ready.

MARY. I must go. Until to-morrow.

ALLEN. Until to-morrow.

MARY (*to SMYTHE, as she goes up stage*). Tell Freda, when she comes, to wait for me. I will call for her.

SMYTHE. Yes. (*Exit MARY, c.*) Wish you luck, Tom. Great girl. Kind of icy, though. Now, Freda is different —

ALLEN. Yes, I know, Toby. Let me wish you luck.

SMYTHE. Gee! I don't know. I can never tell how I stand with Freda.

ALLEN (*laughingly*). Don't lose courage, Toby.

SMYTHE. It's all right for you to say that, because you're solid.

ALLEN. One can never tell what may happen between one day and the next.

SMYTHE. Guess you're right, Tom. Did you see my father yesterday?

ALLEN. Yes. I've pretty good proof that Montford-Ely did not spend one-sixth of the money Searles paid him to be used in lobbying at Albany.

SMYTHE. What! You mean that Ely stole most of it?

ALLEN. Well, let us say, appropriated it for his own use. Ely has been speculating, and has lost heavily. This money from Searles came in rather handy to tide him over.

SMYTHE. You're going to show him up to Searles?

ALLEN. Not until your father agrees to leave Searles out in this investigation.

SMYTHE. Will he?

ALLEN. I'm to know to-morrow.

(*FREDA SEARLES enters hurriedly, l.*)

FREDA. Good-morning, Mr. Allen. Where is Mary?

ALLEN. She —

FREDA. Why, there's Toby. (*Goes to him.*)

SMYTHE (*dolefully*). Yes, it's I, Freda.

ALLEN. My move. (*Goes up stage.*) Your sister wishes you to wait for her here. (*Pause. FREDA pays no*

attention to ALLEN, for she is engrossed in her conversation with SMYTHE.) Did you hear me, Freda?

FREDA (*startled*). Oh! yes, yes. I beg your pardon, Mr. Allen. What—er—what was it you said?

ALLEN. Your sister desires you to wait for her here.

FREDA. I suppose I must, then.

(SMYTHE *signs to ALLEN to clear out.*)

ALLEN. I will see you again.

(*Exit, laughing, c.*)

FREDA. Now, Mr. Toby Smythe, give an account of your actions at Mrs. Leather's dance last night.

SMYTHE. What did I do?

FREDA. Do! What did you mean by dancing three times with Emma Springer? Why! she's as old as my sister Mary. And thin! She's painfully so. The papers say she's willowy, but I call her skinny.

SMYTHE. Why—wh——

FREDA. Now, don't say you didn't or that she dances divinely; because she doesn't. I think she's awkward. Always bumping in to some one and not even apologizing.

SMYTHE (*determinedly*). See here, Freda, you're rubbing it in. You know I asked you for every dance, and you said they were all taken.

FREDA. What if I did? If you'd had any spunk you would have insisted. You might have, at least, come to see how I was getting on.

SMYTHE. I'd better go. (*Starts up stage.*)

FREDA. Don't go, Toby. I'll forgive you.

SMYTHE (*coming down*). You're not treating me just right, Freda. I think you're the best girl—I—er—I—ever knew.

FREDA. Now you're being nice, Toby.

SMYTHE (*coming to her and trying to take her hand*). Freda.

FREDA. Now, Toby, you have spoiled it by becoming sentimental. You always want to do like the hero in a novel. The pale moon above and one last look into her soulful eyes, and all that sort of thing.

SMYTHE. You never take me seriously.

(*Enter MRS. DOANE, L.*)

MRS. DOANE. This is an unexpected pleasure, Freda and Mr. Smythe. (*Shakes hands.*) Mr. Searles is not here?

SMYTHE. No. We expect him back at any moment. (*Goes up stage.*) You will excuse me?

MRS. DOANE. Certainly.

(*Exit SMYTHE, C.*)

FREDA (*standing looking at MRS. DOANE*). Won't you—er—er—be seated, Mrs. Doane?

MRS. DOANE. Thank you.

(*Sits in chair near desk. Slight pause.*)

FREDA. Do you enjoy motoring?

MRS. DOANE. Yes. I'm a most enthusiastic admirer of it. You are, of course?

FREDA. Oh, yes. (*Pause.*) You—you—won't—er—consider me—er—rude, if I were to ask you to—er—excuse me?

MRS. DOANE. Don't let me detain you.

FREDA (*with a sigh of relief*). Some shopping before Mary comes.

(*Exit, door C.*)

MRS. DOANE (*laughing*). I fear I interrupted a most interesting situation. (*Sees plan on desk. Picks it up and studies it.*) Plan of a bank. (*Studies it more closely.*) Why! it's this bank.

(*Enter ELY, L.*)

ELY. Agnes (*MRS. DOANE rises and drops plan on desk*), and here alone. How fortunate.

MRS. DOANE. Yes.

ELY. What was that paper?

MRS. DOANE (*handing ELY the plan*). Plan of a bank.

ELY. What! This bank!

MRS. DOANE. Is it? It appears, to my inexperienced eye, that one with a plan like that would not encounter much difficulty in securing some of the good things stored within those safes.

ELY. You mean—— Why put such an idea into my head? (*Puts plan into his pocket.*)

MRS. DOANE (*laughing*). My dear Monty, how honest you are becoming.

ELY. As honest as most men.

MRS. DOANE. I've heard of banks being robbed before.

ELY. Is this a joke?

MRS. DOANE. As I alighted from my car, I noticed two men; really, Monty (*laughs*), they reminded me of one's country cousins trying to appear at ease at a five o'clock tea.

ELY. You see and talk too much.

MRS. DOANE. Then I shall be blind and dumb.

ELY. Enough of this. What did you learn regarding the Consolidated?

MRS. DOANE. Enough to send you to prison.

ELY. That's refreshing.

MRS. DOANE. Allen has secured information of your having used the money entrusted to you by Searles for your own use.

ELY. That's nothing to worry about.

MRS. DOANE. Isn't it? What will Searles do when Allen tells him?

ELY. Nothing. He won't dare to. To accuse me of having misappropriated the money would only convict him of having been a party to the bribery, in connection with the Consolidated. I don't think he'll want to be drawn into the investigation. You see, Agnes, I'm quite safe.

MRS. DOANE. Suppose Allen has been clever enough to arrange with this man, Senator Smythe, to protect Searles?

ELY. I don't believe he'd do it.

MRS. DOANE. I do. Allen has had an interview with him. He's to receive his answer to-morrow.

ELY. 'The devil! My only hope is in forcing Searles to make Mary agree to marry me, before Allen has the opportunity of telling him. As Mary's husband he would not dare to have me arrested.

MRS. DOANE. And if she won't?

ELY. I have made provision for that. You are to invite her to your apartments. The reason you will give to get her there I will let you know later. After you get her there I'll take care of the rest. Some one is coming. It's best for us not to be seen together. When Searles returns tell him that Allen has seen Smythe and they have evidence enough to convict him. Hush, he's coming.

(*Exit ELY quickly, L., as SEARLES enters C.*)

SEARLES. Accept my apologies, Mrs. Doane, for having kept you waiting.

MRS. DOANE. No need of an apology, Mr. Searles. I know what a busy man you are.

SEARLES. Hum! Now, to business. What information have you ——

MRS. DOANE. Bad. Very bad. Allen knows everything. Has seen Smythe ——

(*Reënter ELY, L.*)

ELY. Mrs. Doane! I hardly expected you so soon. Been here long?

MRS. DOANE. No ——

SEARLES (*excitedly*). Allen has information enough to convict us!

ELY. Us? That's your affair, cousin.

SEARLES. Would you desert me?

ELY. Yes, unless you secure Mary's consent to marry me.

SEARLES (*pause. With effort*). I'll—I'll—do my—best.

(*Enter MARY, C.*)

MARY. Oh! You're engaged.

MRS. DOANE. No. We were just about to go.

MARY. I thought my sister was here.

(*ALLEN enters, door C.*)

ALLEN. Gregory has returned and wants to see the plan.

SEARLES. It is where you left it, on the desk.

ALLEN (*crosses to desk. Not seeing plan tosses about other papers, which are on desk. Speaks excitedly*). It's gone!

(*Crosses to C.* MRS. DOANE *is* L. C. MARY, R. SEARLES, R. C. ELY, L.)

SEARLES. You left it there as I went out.

(*ALLEN looks suspiciously at MRS. DOANE.*)

MRS. DOANE. Why do you look so sharply at me, Mr. Allen? Surely, you would not accuse me of having taken it, even though I had been here alone?

SEARLES. It must be there somewhere.

ELY. If it isn't there, then Allen knows where it is.

ALLEN. What do you mean?

ELY. It's a trick, Searles. Allen is trying to checkmate Mrs. Doane, whom he knows is endeavoring to defeat him in his efforts to incriminate you in the matter of the Consolidated.

MRS. DOANE. How absurd!

ELY. He wants to brand Mrs. Doane as a thief so that he can earn the money that Smythe is spending to get evidence for his investigation.

ALLEN. You lie!—you—it was you who stole the plan.

ELY (*going to him*). Retract that, you spy.

ALLEN. No, you deceitful cur!

(ALLEN *drops handkerchief, as he springs forward to strike*

ELY. MARY *throws herself between them.*)

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Library in home of SEARLES. For description see Scene Plot, page 6. At rise MARY is discovered seated on sofa, R., reading newspaper.*

MARY (*reading from paper*). A daring bank robbery. The People's Bank looted. The night-watchman found bound and gagged. It was, undoubtedly, the work of professionals. Entrance to the bank had been gained through a window that faces on a blind alley.

(*Enter FREDa, door C.*)

FREDa (*calling*). Mary.

MARY. Yes, Freda.

FREDa (*coming down*). What, reading the account of the bank robbery again? You'll know it by heart soon.

MARY. Not as bad as racing down to the bank as you have done.

FREDa. Oh! Mary, you ought to have seen it. The bars outside of the window were sawed off as if they were pieces of wire. And, oh! Mary, you should see the room! The big vault door was blown off just as though it had been wood. Everything is strewn all over the floor. You never saw such a place. Every one is racing around, wildly excited. The reporters are butting in, so Mr. Allen says. I never had so much fun as I did watching them.

MARY. It's rather serious fun, Freda. (*Enter SEARLES, door L.*) Father!

FREDa. Dad!

(*Both girls rush to him and throw their arms around him.*)

SEARLES (*as they come to C.*). At last—home, where there's peace and quietness.

MARY. You must be all tired out from the worry and excitement at the bank.

SEARLES. Yes, all I've been doing is listening to theories advanced by the police, as to how it was done; the requests

of the reporters for information, as if I had been an eye-witness to it all. I'll go and lie down, for a short rest, before dinner.

(All go up, and exit SEARLES, C. MARY and FREDA come down and MARY sits on sofa, R.)

FREDA. Why do you look so serious, Mary?

MARY. I'm worried about father.

FREDA. I wouldn't worry, Mary. After this affair is cleaned up he'll be all right again.

MARY. Perhaps so.

FREDA. Who do you think could have robbed the bank?

MARY. What a question, Freda.

FREDA. I think Mrs. Doane might tell us something about it, if she only would.

MARY. Women don't rob banks, like this one was.

FREDA. Perhaps not. But it's strange where that plan of the bank went. I know how they accused Tom, but he didn't take it.

MARY. No. Tom—er, Mr. Allen—never took it, you may be assured.

FREDA. Nor Toby.

MARY. No.

FREDA. Then that only leaves Mrs. Doane and Montford-Ely.

MARY. Er—yes. Why should they want to rob the bank? Why they are both—— How absurd you are, Freda.

FREDA. Oh, I don't know. They need money, like other people. Toby told me how hard pushed Ely was for money.

MARY. One cannot always rely on what Toby says.

FREDA. Well now, that's a mean speech, Mary Searles.

MARY. Forgive me, sister. I did not intend to hurt your feelings.

FREDA. But you did. Mary, is—is ——

MARY. What is it, Freda?

FREDA. Is Montford-Ely anything to you?

MARY. What do you mean?

FREDA. You're not going—going to—to marry him, are you?

MARY. No—Freda.

FREDA. I'm glad to know it. I wish father would cut him.

MARY (*rising*). Business makes strange bed fellows.

(*Enter SMYTHE, L.*)

SMYTHE. Hello, everybody.

FREDA. Why, Toby! (*Suddenly becomes frigid.*) Mr. Smythe, I do not consider your salutation a proper one for ladies.

SMYTHE. Nothing I do seems proper in your eyes, Freda. However — (*To MARY, shaking hands with great formality.*) How do you do, Miss Searles? (*Same business with FREDA.*) How do you do, Freda?

FREDA. That's better. Why do you call Mary Miss Searles, and me just Freda?

SMYTHE. I'm —er—well—er—you see —

FREDA. No, I don't see.

SMYTHE. Well, you see —

FREDA. I told you I didn't see.

SMYTHE. If you must know—er—er—I'm not going to —to—marry Mary.

FREDA. Are you me?

SMYTHE. I—I—don't know. I like—I'd like to.

FREDA. Then I'm afraid you will have to continue—just liking to. (*Sits on divan, R.*)

MARY. I'm going.

(*Exit, c.*)

SMYTHE (*crossing to divan*). Freda, you—you know I —I—think the world of you.

FREDA. That's no reason why you should say so before Mary.

SMYTHE. I'm sorry. (*Crosses to c.*) Freda, I've come to say good-bye.

FREDA. Good-bye!

SMYTHE (*dolefully*). Yes.

FREDA (*crossing to c.*). Where—where are you going?

SMYTHE. To—to—be—a—arrested.

FREDA. For what?

SMYTHE. As an accomplice of Tom Allen's. For robbing the bank.

FREDA. Tom Allen isn't going to be arrested.

SMYTHE. I ought to know. They had him up before the Board this morning. Some of Ely's work. He's been nosing around all morning.

FREDA. Oh, Toby! Toby! Ah, they won't arrest you. They won't. I'll see father.

SMYTHE. Don't see him! Don't! I'm—I'm not sure I'm to be arrested.

FREDA. Then why did you say you were?

SMYTHE. Wanted to see how you'd feel.

FREDA (*crossing R.*). It wouldn't bother me at all. I was only excited over the fun of attending the trial. Don't you, really, think you'll be arrested?

SMYTHE (*savagely*). No. (*Goes to her, with feeling.*) You think it's fun to watch a fellow getting sent away to—to—break stone or—or—that sort a thing, when he's innocent?

(*Enter ALLEN, L.*)

ALLEN (*pausing just inside door*). Beg pardon. Do I intrude?

FREDA. Oh!

SMYTHE. Hello, Tom.

ALLEN. Is Mary at home?

FREDA. Yes. I'll tell her you're here.

(*Exit, C.*)

SMYTHE. Tom, did—did they accuse me of—of—robbing the bank?

ALLEN. No, Toby. It's merely another move of Ely's to get me out of the way. I know too much for his comfort.

SMYTHE. Did you hear from my father?

ALLEN. Yes. I have all the information that is necessary to send Ely to prison. But now ——

SMYTHE. What?

ALLEN. Searles refuses to see me. I fear he believes me guilty of having robbed the bank.

SMYTHE. Father telegraphed he'd be here to-night. I'll get him to help you.

ALLEN (*taking SMYTHE by the hand*). Thanks, Toby, old man, thanks.

(*Enter MARY, C.*)

MARY. Tom !

ALLEN. Mary !

SMYTHE. I guess I'll go. Where's Freda ?

MARY. In the billiard room.

SMYTHE. Thanks. See you later, Tom.

(*Exit, c.*)

ALLEN. Mary, I must apologize for that scene —

MARY. No, Tom, please.

ALLEN. Then I won't.

MARY. You look worried, Tom.

ALLEN. Yesterday I believed the world was all sunshine and happiness.

MARY. Isn't it ?

ALLEN. No. It has many heartaches, many disappointments.

MARY. Why, Tom ! You are becoming a pessimist.

ALLEN. Yesterday saw the culmination of a number of big deals that I was interested in. It made me financially independent. Then, when you told me to come to-day, I felt that I was enjoying the greatest happiness that man could desire.

MARY. Yes, Tom.

ALLEN. But that happiness was not to be of long duration.

MARY. Do you fear my answer ?

ALLEN. Mary ! I can't ask you what that answer would be.

MARY. Tom, what has happened ?

ALLEN. Nothing actually. It is the suspicion that hangs over me. Mary ! I can't ! I won't come to you and ask you to share my life, my name, while there is the slightest taint of suspicion resting upon it.

MARY. Tom, a woman may be the essence of contrariness. But yet, for the man she honors and respects, the man she loves she would give her life. Yes, her honor if needs be.

ALLEN. Mary ! Mary ! I can't ! I can't ! I have not the right. It would be wrong to ask you to be my wife, while the stigma of this crime hangs over me.

MARY. Let me be the judge of that.

(*Enter JENNIE, L.*)

JENNIE. Beg pardon, Miss Mary. A letter for you. The messenger is waiting for an answer.

MARY (*taking letter. To ALLEN*). You will pardon me?

ALLEN. Certainly.

MARY (*reading letter. To JENNIE*). Tell the messenger he need not wait. I'll send the reply later.

JENNIE. Yes, Miss Mary.

(*Exit, L. 2.*)

MARY. Listen, Tom. (*Reads from letter.*) "If convenient for you, will you please call to-morrow afternoon, at three? I may be able to tell you something about the disappearance of the bank plan. Yours in haste, Agnes Doane. P. S.—Messenger will wait for your answer."

ALLEN. What does that mean?

MARY. I don't know. I can't understand it.

ALLEN. Do you intend going?

MARY. I don't know.—Yes—I—think I shall.

ALLEN. I wouldn't. It sounds suspicious.

MARY (*laughingly*). Why, Tom?

ALLEN. I don't like that woman.

MARY. Why should I fear her? What has she to tell me? Who knows, Tom, she may be able to help remove this suspicion from you. I think it's best that I should go.

ALLEN. It at least can do no harm. When you go, however, Mary, I'll not be far away. It may be doing Mrs. Doane an injustice, but I don't like her relationship with Ely.

(*Enter JENNIE, L.*)

JENNIE. Mr. Montford-Ely, to see Mr. Searles.

MARY. Show him in, Jennie. I'll send father down. Come, Tom, we'll join Freda and Toby.

(*Exeunt, C.*)

(*Enter ELY, L. He glances about, and on not seeing any one, goes to table, C., picks up book and looks at it. Enter SEARLES, door C.*)

SEARLES. Well, Ely, what now?

ELY. What are you going to do with Allen?

SEARLES. I don't see that we can do anything. The testimony of the night watchman, who is suffering with a broken head, isn't sufficient to have any one arrested.

ELY. I think it is. The fact that it was Allen's handkerchief that was used as a gag appears to me to be conclusive evidence enough.

SEARLES. Yes. But you must recall that you are the only one who was able to identify it as being Allen's.

ELY. True. But when we add the information concerning him that I have secured to-day, there'll be no question of his conviction. The watchman admits that Allen worked late last night. That he also called his attention to the way the lumber was piled in the alleyway, under the window. Also that the bars across the window were not any too strong.

SEARLES. You can't convict a man on that evidence.

ELY. Further, you can prove that Allen was the last one to have the plan of the bank.

SEARLES. He wouldn't need it. He would have no occasion to blow the door, for he knows the combination.

ELY. I'm not saying he did. But I do say he had experienced men to do it.

SEARLES. Then he'd tell them the combination.

ELY. He's no fool. To do that would have been most conclusive evidence of his guilt. He was too crafty for that. Tell me, where did he get the large sum of money he deposited to-day in the Erie bank?

SEARLES. I had not heard of that.

ELY. Nor that he has been speculating heavily?

SEARLES. No.

ELY. You must have him arrested.

SEARLES. We must make no mistake.

ELY. I tell you, you must. If for no other reason than to close his mouth on the Consolidated matter.

SEARLES. This affair of the bank's has driven all other matters from my mind. Yes, he must be arrested. If only to protect ourselves.

ELY. I'm glad you see it in that light. I've taken the liberty of having a warrant sworn out, in your name, for his arrest. The detectives are now looking for him.

SEARLES. Hum.

ELY. Now, Searles, this affair of Mary's and mine?

SEARLES. It's a hard task you're placing upon me.

ELY. Not half so hard as Blackwell's Island —

SEARLES. My God! not that. Think of the disgrace. The—disgrace.

ELY (*ringing bell on table. Enter JENNIE, L.*). Tell Miss Mary that her father wishes to see her.

JENNIE. Yes, sir.

(*Exit JENNIE, C. SEARLES, much agitated, walks up and down stage.*)

(*Enter MARY, C.*)

MARY. What is it, father? You sent for me?

SEARLES. Mary, you and Freda are all I have in the world. Mary, I want you, for my sake, to—to—consent to marry Ely.

MARY. Father! (*Pause.*) Father! what—what—do you mean?

(*SMYTHE comes to door C., pauses, and as conversation proceeds he hides behind portière at door C.*)

SEARLES. Don't force me to tell you why.

MARY. You must, father. (*Throws arms around his neck.*) You must!

(*Exit SMYTHE, hurriedly.*)

SEARLES. Why insist, Ely? Don't you see how hard it is? (*Sinks into chair, R.*) My heart is breaking—breaking.

ELY. Mary, your father is in a bad way. Business, you know.

SEARLES. Yes, Mary. Your marriage with Ely is the only means of saving me.

(*ALLEN and SMYTHE enter, door C.*)

MARY. Mr. Ely, a daughter's first duty is to her parents. I don't love you. I never can love you. But, to save my father from disgrace, I'd—I'd —

ALLEN (*coming down*). Do nothing.

MARY. Tom.

ALLEN. Mr. Searles, I've tried to tell you many times to-day, but you would not see me, that that man (*points to ELY*) is a scoundrel. Hardly a dollar of the money obtained from you, under the guise of using it to further the

Consolidated's interests, was ever spent for that purpose. It was used mostly by that man for his own needs.

ELY. Very clever, Allen. Most amusing.

ALLEN. Your tool, Courtney, has confessed. He has told how, at your bidding, he instigated the bribery rumor, which resulted in the investigation; so that you would have (*points to SEARLES*) that man in your power.

ELY. You lie! It's a lie, Searles! Allen is trying to do the Good Samaritan act. 'Thinks it'll save him, but it won't. Who'd believe a thief?

ALLEN. Thief!

SMYTHE. Don't be too sure, Mr. Ely. (*To SEARLES, as he points at ELY.*) More proof of that man's perfidy can be had when my father arrives home to-night.

ELY. Bah, be quiet, boy. Searles, Allen is the one who robbed the bank. The police have all the proof necessary for his arrest.

(*Goes to door L., and motions to DETECTIVE, off.*)

ALLEN. What! You—you ——

(*DETECTIVE enters quickly, L.*)

DETECTIVE (*displaying badge*). Which is Allen?

ELY. That's your man. Arrest him.

MARY (*as DETECTIVE goes to ALLEN and snaps handcuffs on him*). Father!

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*Apartment of MRS. DOANE, Hotel Bremer, Central Park. For description see Scene Plot, page 7. Double door L., with draperies. At rise MRS. DOANE enters L., crosses R., and looks at clock.*

MRS. DOANE. Mary Searles will soon be here. (*Crosses L., while speaking.*) Fred! Fred! why am I assisting you to place another in that position which rightly belongs to me? No, I must always remain just a faithful friend.

(*Enter ELY, R.*)

ELY. Just for a moment, Agnes. She is coming?

MRS. DOANE. Yes, at three.

ELY (*looking at watch*). It's very nearly that now. Good.

MRS. DOANE. What am I to say to her?

ELY. Tell her—that—— What the devil is the need of telling her anything, so long as you get her here?

MRS. DOANE. How can I keep her? Suppose Allen is with her?

ELY. No fear of that. He has been arrested.

MRS. DOANE. So I saw by the paper.

ELY. This morning he was held, on probable cause, for the next session of the Grand Jury. I've had a few exciting days.

MRS. DOANE. Then let us go away, Fred. Abroad—Paris, Venice or one of the countless other places where we can be happy. Just you and I.

ELY. Not till I've secured the prize. Mary Searles must be my wife.

MRS. DOANE. Then I'll be tossed aside like a broken toy.

ELY. Who said so?

MRS. DOANE. It isn't necessary to say so. I can never be more to you than—than—just a friend——

ELY. What nonsense is this?

MRS. DOANE. Ah! Fred, we were happy. Happy until——

ELY. You tire me. I'll go.

MRS. DOANE. No! No! Fred!

ELY. Agnes, I must marry Mary Searles. I must have her money. As her husband, Searles would not dare to have me arrested for the robbery of the bank.

MRS. DOANE. You were in that, too?

ELY. Who said so?

MRS. DOANE. I'm no fool, Fred.

ELY. Yes, I'm in it deep. Mary Searles is my only hope of safety.

MRS. DOANE. If she refuses you?

ELY. She won't.

MRS. DOANE. Where are you going to take her?

ELY. To the home of a woman named Boyce. Where she will be as safe as though she was in a tomb.

MRS. DOANE. Yes.

ELY (*crossing R.*). I must be going. Don't fail me.

(*Exit, door R.*)

MRS. DOANE (*standing looking at door R. for a moment*). Ah! what a fool a woman is. I do this for you, Fred. Why! Why! because I love you. I who cannot be more to you — Oh! no! no! no! (*Goes up to window, c. Enter MARY, R. MRS. DOANE comes down.*) So good of you to come, Miss Searles.

MARY. Thank you.

MRS. DOANE. Won't you sit down?

MARY (*sitting on sofa L.*). Thank you.

MRS. DOANE. I suppose you're wondering why I—I—did not — Oh! let me say how much I deplore the arrest of Mr. Allen. What a shock it was to me. I've always considered him a most estimable young man.

MARY. Thank you. You will be glad to hear that he is free, at least for a time.

MRS. DOANE. Thanks to your father, of course.

MARY. No, to Senator Smythe.

MRS. DOANE. How fortunate that the Senator should arrive home just at this time.

MARY. We're wasting time, Mrs. Doane. If you can tell me nothing, I'll go. (*Rises.*)

MRS. DOANE (*forcing her back on the sofa*). No! no! You're not going.

MARY. Mrs. Doane, will you allow me to pass?

MRS. DOANE. I say you are not going.

MARY. What does this mean?

MRS. DOANE. That you will not leave this room until I let you.

MARY. How absurd.

MRS. DOANE. Your baby face has robbed me of the man I love.

MARY. If you refer to Montford-Ely, let me tell you I detest and despise him.

MRS. DOANE. You little fool, do you think I believe or care what you may say? No! He's set his mind on having you. He's going to have you, no matter how. Do you understand? No matter how!

MARY. You do not know what you are saying.

MRS. DOANE (*laughing hysterically*). You can't make me believe that you do not care, do not love him. You can't deceive me, as he is trying to do. I tell you you can't! You can't! What right have you to take him from me? He's mine! mine!

MARY. Woman, you are going mad.

MRS. DOANE. Yes, mad, mad.

MARY. Then, let me pass.

MRS. DOANE (*laughing wildly*). Ah! no! no! I tell you. It's part of your plan for him to kidnap you, here in my apartments. To delude me.

MARY. What are you saying? You fiend, let me pass.

(MRS. DOANE *has her back toward door R., obscuring MARY'S view of the door.*)

MRS. DOANE. You think he loves you. (*Enter ELY, R., stands behind half-opened door unobserved and listens.*) He doesn't. It's your money he wants. He wants you for his wife, to protect ——

ELY (*springing to her*). You traitress!

(*Strikes MRS. DOANE, who sinks to the floor.*)

MARY. Oh! you brute.

(*Starts R. ELY catches her by the wrist and draws her into his arms.*)

ELY. At last, Mary, my kisses shall fall upon your lips.

(*Kisses her.*)

MARY (*struggling and freeing herself. She stands with back toward door R., bewildered*). Oh!

ELY (*starting toward her*). Are my kisses so repulsive to you?

MARY (*whipping small revolver from out of her pocket*). Don't, don't come near me.

ELY (*YERKES and ADAMS enter, silently, door R.*). So, my little cat has a revolver, instead of claws. (*To YERKES and ADAMS.*) Now.

(*YERKES springs forward and wrenches the revolver from MARY. MARY screams. ADAMS presses chloroformed handkerchief to her nose. MARY sinks into YERKES' arms. Exeunt all, R. The breaking in of a door is heard off stage, L. ALLEN and SMYTHE rush in through door L. MRS. DOANE dazed from the blow, slowly struggles to her feet. ALLEN assists her to sofa L.*)

ALLEN. What has happened? Where is Mary?

SMYTHE. Yes. Wh-what's the—the matter?

MRS. DOANE. Oh! the coward, to strike me.

ALLEN. Who? (*MRS. DOANE laughs hysterically.*)
Calm yourself, Mrs. Doane.

MRS. DOANE. Yes, yes. They've taken her away.
And I—I helped them. (*Cries.*)

ALLEN. Control yourself.

MRS. DOANE (*controlling herself. Speaks determinedly*).
He struck me. (*Rises.*) Quick. They are taking Mary away. Oh! go, go!

ALLEN. Where, where?

MRS. DOANE. To the home of a woman named Boyce, on the East Side.

ALLEN. Who is taking her? My God! Quick, Toby, the police.

(*Exit SMYTHE, door R.*)

MRS. DOANE. Where you find the abductors of Mary, you will find those who robbed the bank. I've been his toy, his plaything. But no more. No more! I'll leave no stone unturned to send him to prison. Now, go, before harm can come to her. (*Exit ALLEN, door R.*) Oh! Ely, Ely. I loved you. Loved you. (*Vehemently.*) But no more, no more. (*Leans against door R., crying.*)

ACT IV

SCENE.—*Cellar room in the house of "Mother Boyce."*
See Scene Plot, page 7. At L. is a door leading into another part of the cellar and thence to upper parts of the house. At C. is a short flight of stairs leading up to a door that opens out on to an alleyway. Under stairs is a closet. Down R. is a common kitchen table, much the worse for wear. About the table are three dilapidated chairs. Over table and hanging from ceiling is a large lamp. Up L. is a portable couch, upon which are pillows, cheap blanket and an old-fashioned comforter.)

(*At rise YERKES and ADAMS are discovered seated at table. MARY seated on couch. MOTHER BOYCE is standing left of table.*)

YERKES. Say, Eve, I don't like this kidnapping business.

ADAMS. Chicken-hearted, Tin?

YERKES. No. Feels though it wan't goin' to turn out just right.

MOTHER BOYCE. Hump! Why don't yer think o' that first?

YERKES. When I'm doin' business with a man an' he wants me to do more I'm not cryin' quits.

MOTHER BOYCE. Yes, an' we'll be all jugged. Shame on ye fer bringin' disgrace on a poor, honest, old woman like me.

YERKES. Sittin' 'ere talkin' about it won't do any good. I'm goin' down the line. Comin', Eve?

ADAMS. Sure. Say, Tin, when's de guy comin' to divvy the swag?

YERKES. He'll be 'ere to-night.

ADAMS. All right.

(*Exit, door L.*)

YERKES (*standing in doorway L. To MOTHER BOYCE*). Don't forget to take her for some air. This hole will kill her.

MOTHER BOYCE. It's good 'nough fer me.

YERKES. You heard what I said.

MOTHER BOYCE. Yes.

YERKES. Don't forget it.

MOTHER BOYCE. No, Tin.

YERKES. All right.

(Exit, door L.)

MOTHER BOYCE. Come get yer things on an' I'll take yer fer an airin'.

MARY. Why do you keep me here? Are you a woman, with a woman's heart?

MOTHER BOYCE. Hold yer tongue.

(Drags her from couch.)

MARY. Stop! I'll go.

MOTHER BOYCE *(as MARY starts to put on hat and coat)*. No, them things be too good. 'Ere. *(Hands MARY an old shawl. MARY hesitates.)* Put it on. *(MARY throws it over her head.)* Come along, and don't try and get away.

(She leads MARY up stairs, c., and exeunt.)

(ALLEN and SMYTHE, with revolvers drawn, enter L.)

ALLEN *(putting revolver in pocket)*. Guess we won't need them, Toby.

SMYTHE. No. This is an awful hole, Tom.

ALLEN. Yes, and to think that Mary should be confined here.

SMYTHE. It doesn't appear as though she were.

ALLEN *(displaying coat which he has found on couch)*. Toby! What's this?

SMYTHE. Mary's coat! Where can she be?

ALLEN. I don't know. But I'm going to find out. You go back the way we came. Find Searles and the police. Send a squad around to that door *(points to door c.)* and guide the rest of them through the house the same way as we came.

SMYTHE. What are you going to do?

ALLEN. Never mind me. Go, and be quick.

SMYTHE. Take care of yourself, Tom.

(Exit, L.)

(*Fumbling is heard outside door C. ALLEN hides in closet, near stairs, as YERKES enters. ADAMS quickly follows him.*)

ADAMS. Where's de old woman?

YERKES (*putting can on table*). Givin' the girl an airin'. Wish I hadn't told her ter take the girl out to-night. I'm afraid of this business. Woke up suddenly like, last night. Thought it was all up with me.

ADAMS. Cut it, Tin. You's goin' ter bits. When yer out yer wants ter come in. An' when yer 'ere yer don't know what ter do.

(*Enter MOTHER BOYCE, C., shoving MARY ahead of her.*)

MOTHER BOYCE (*snatching shawl from MARY*). Did my little bird like 'er airin'? (*To YERKES.*) What did yer bring 'er 'ere for?

ADAMS. Cut it, mother. De swell guy is comin' ter-night, an' then we're finished.

MOTHER BOYCE. Make him do the right thing.

ADAMS. Dis guy will do the white thing, Tin?

YERKES. Sure.

ADAMS. All right, Tin. But we'd better have an understandin' afore he comes. No five thousand dollars for the job. We split even.

MOTHER BOYCE. That's right, boys.

YERKES. 'Course we will. De yer think I'm easy?

MOTHER BOYCE (*rising*). That's right, that's right.

(*Crosses toward L. as ELY enters L.*)

ELY. Good-evening.

MOTHER BOYCE (*making courtesy*). Good-evenin' ter ye, sir.

YERKES. You can go, mother.

(*MOTHER BOYCE looks savagely at YERKES, then exits, door L.*)

ELY (*to MARY*). How is my lady love to-night? (*Pause.*) Won't speak.

ADAMS. If yer can make her talk it's more 'en we can do.

ELY. Mary, if you consent to be my wife it will end

here. If not, then early to-morrow you are to be placed on a yacht, and we'll ride on and on, you as my toy, to be fondled or tossed aside as the whim may strike me.

MARY (*rising*). Oh! you—you—despicable villain. Death has far less terrors for me, than marriage with you. (*To YERKES and ADAMS.*) Are you men? Men who respect womanhood? Will you sit there and permit this—this ——

YERKES. Come, Ely, this ain't any torture chamber.

ELY (*turning, drawing revolver*). Who are you talking to?

YERKES (*has ELY covered*). Drop yer gun, Ely. I've got yer covered.

ELY (*putting revolver in pocket*). It's your move.

YERKES. Sit down.

(ELY *sits right of table.*)

ADAMS. Now, let's divvy. Share and share alike.

ELY. You're mistaken. I'm to give you five thousand apiece.

ADAMS. We's changed our minds.

ELY (*seeing YERKES standing behind ADAMS and nervously fingering revolver in his pocket*). It's not a square deal.

YERKES. Guess we's knows what's square an' what's not.

ELY. You're in command of the situation.

ADAMS. We thought yer'd see the thing, all right enough. (*To YERKES.*) Get the stuff, Tin.

(YERKES goes to supposed hiding-place under stairs, from which he takes four bags of money. Places one bag on table opposite ELY, one opposite ADAMS, at C., and another opposite vacant chair, L. The fourth one he empties out on to the table. YERKES stands right of ADAMS as ADAMS and ELY divide the money. MARY dashes for door, L. YERKES draws revolver and fires at her. Just as MARY disappears through the doorway, ELY springs to his feet and rushes after her, followed by YERKES. ALLEN comes from out of the closet and gliding up back of ADAMS, who has remained in his chair, strikes him over the head with his revolver. ADAMS falls across the table.)

MOTHER BOYCE (*off stage*). Thought yer'd escape, did yer?

(*As YERKES reënters door, L., ALLEN fires at him. YERKES drops his revolver to the floor and his right arm falls lifeless to his side. He rushes at ALLEN. They grapple and fight.*)

ELY (*off stage*). Stay where you are, Mrs. Boyce; she may try it again. (*ELY reënters, dragging MARY after him. Seeing ALLEN he pushes MARY from him, and draws revolver.*) Look out, Yerkes, till I finish the meddling fool.

MARY (*picking up the revolver which YERKES has dropped, as ALLEN gets the best of him*). Move an inch, Montford-Ely, and I'll fire.

(*ELY turns to MARY. ALLEN tosses YERKES aside; then springs at ELY and forces his revolver into the air. ELY's revolver is harmlessly discharged. They struggle.*)

MOTHER BOYCE (*off stage*). The police! The police!
(*Enter MOTHER BOYCE, door L.*) The police!

(*Simultaneously with the entrance of the police, door L., led by SMYTHE, the door at the head of stairs, C., is burst open, and more police enter, followed by SEARLES. They drag ADAMS, YERKES and MOTHER BOYCE into the upper R. corner. ELY struggles between two policemen, R.*)

SEARLES. Mary! Mary, my child! (*Takes her in his arms. To ELY.*) At last, Montford-Ely, I find you in your true colors.

(*Enter FREDa, accompanied by MRS. DOANE, L.*)

ELY. Yes, Searles, the game is up. You've got me beaten.

MRS. DOANE. Yes.

ELY. Agnes! You?

MRS. DOANE. Not Agnes to you. You struck me, Montford-Ely, and now you must pay the price for that fatal blow.

ELY. You—you—are—against me?

MRS. DOANE. Yes! It's my revenge! (*Following is spoken as she exits, L.*) It's my revenge!

(She laughs hysterically off stage. ELY breaks from police and dashes toward door at C., but is overtaken before reaching it, and two drag ELY after them through door C.)

FREDA. Toby.

SMYTHE. Where—where did you come from?

SEARLES. Allen, I've done you a great wrong. Can you forgive me?

ALLEN. For Mary's sake, yes.

MARY. Tom.

CURTAIN

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